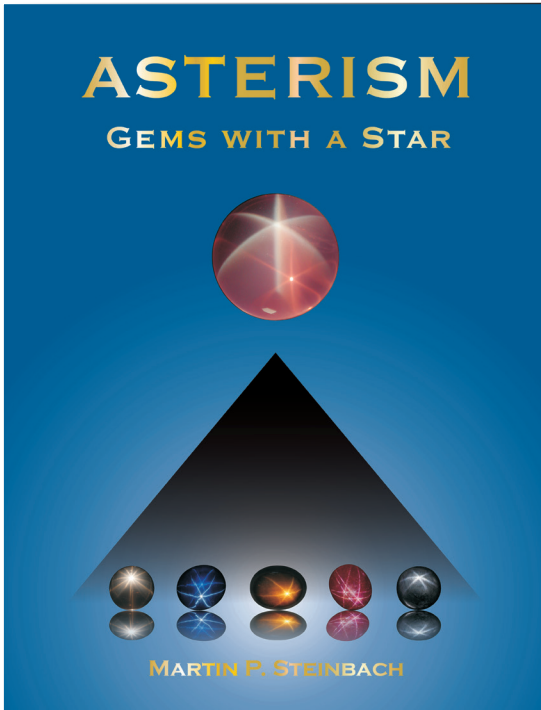


# Book Introduction

## 書籍簡介

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***“The gleaming fiery rays of angel’s hair in the shape of a STAR, the light shape hovering about the surface of a gem, has fascinated people of all cultures and religions for centuries, if not for thousands of years.”***

**- Martin P. Steinbach**

Relatively little has been published to date about the star phenomenon in gemstones. **ASTERISM - Gems with a Star**, is the first anthology of this kind and covers all aspects of these phenomenal gemstones. The book includes hundreds of fascinating photos in about 900 pages - probably not ideal bedtime reading though, as it is printed in A4 size and weighs in at 4.5 kg (nine pounds)

**Editor** Christine Chu discussed the book with the author.

**CC: Why did you choose to write about this particular gemstone phenomenon? Why stars? What is their fascination?**

**MPS:** Look at the sky in darkness. The stars always shine so brightly. You have a wish so you wait for a shooting star. Everybody wants to be a star. Or a superstar. Or a megastar. Or needs a guiding star. Or admires celebrity stars. There is so much love, so much passion, so much emotion, so much magic, mystery and fantasy, connected to a star stone.

If you hold a sphere of star rose quartz up to the sun and look straight through the gem, a very strong six rayed star appears. In the orient people believe that these intersecting rays represent “Faith, Hope and Destiny”.

What is the fascination? It is endless – touching all the emotions, like a passionate red star ruby, a cool blue star sapphire and the excitement of a network of stars on a star garnet or a star quartz.

**CC: Tell us about the book? Can you walk us through it?**

**MPS:** It is divided into 9 main chapters and each chapter is accompanied by a comprehensive literature list.

In Chapter 1, I describe Asterism throughout History. The most important historical sources are mentioned, and I explain the names that have been used for the phenomenon, like *asteria* and *asterius*. Asterism is described and discussed with examples from the Ancient World to the Mysterious Middle Ages, right up to the present day.

In chapter 2, I look at Famous Star Stones - and some of the planet’s most captivating and spectacular star sapphires, are featured. I give brief outlines of their history together with fabulous colour photographs. Amongst them are the Star of Ceylon, Star of Asia, Star of Bombay, the Rosser Reeves Ruby, DeLong Star. Ruby, Star of India, Midnight Star, Star of Jolie and the Black Star of Queensland.

Chapter 3 covers the Scientific Aspects of Asterism. It explains the causes of asterism, correct cutting, shows brief facts about gemstone colour, crystallography, geology and occurrences of gemstones.

Chapter 4 is called Treatments of Gems with a Star. I hope it will be particularly valuable for the (young) gemmologist, including diffusion treatment, glass filling, irradiation, shellac filling, dyeing and heat treatment.

Then, Synthetic Star Gems and the various methods that have been used throughout time to produce synthetic gems (Verneuil, Linde, Kyocera etc.), are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6, covers Imitations of Asteriated Gems, Assembled Gems and Artificial Products. It deals with doublets, triplets, other assembled stones, scratched stars, coatings and, of course, how to identify them.

In my opinion, the beating heart of this compendium is Chapter 7 – “All Gems with a Star”.

It is a huge chapter of 440 pages and covers all existing star gemstones from A to Z. In the “Gemological Data” of each chapter, all the necessary gemmological and mineralogical information is provided. Some gems, like amazonite, where asterism is rarely found, are just touched on, but other gem groups, like corundum, occupy as many as 123 pages in which I talk about the asterism of star rubies and sapphires, the 17 countries where star rubies occur, and the 24 countries that produce star sapphires; their deposits, the different colours they come in, their fascinating star formations and variations.

My topic for Chapter 8 is “Dream Stars”, because the really fantastic star phenomena I showcase only seem possible in dreams. But here they are! Stars with 12 rays, double stars, multiple stars, star networks, stars in transmitted light and every possible variety of trapiche stars in a large range of gems.

The little Chapter 9, Stars n' Art, is a quad-foldout of digital super mini photos. It is an “Art kisses Gemmology” chapter, demonstrating the rich diversity of asterism.



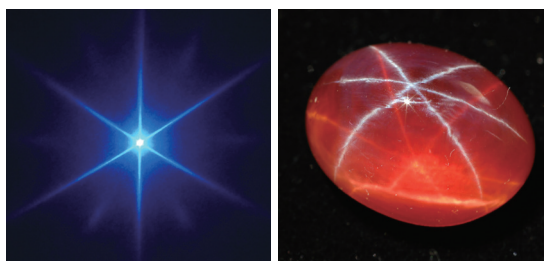
**Fig. 1** (L) The “Star of Heavenly Dreams” star tourmaline. Photo courtesy of Jeff Scovil. (R) Star sapphire, Myanmar, a huge 740 cts! Photo courtesy of Karola Sieber.

(左) “天夢之星”星電氣石。 (右) 緬甸星光藍寶石，740 cts !



**Fig. 2** (L) Black star sapphire, Thailand, approx. 20 cts, with a twin star. (R) Star quartz, Sri Lanka, 16.20 cts, with a “network” of stars.

(左) 雙星黑星藍寶石，泰國，約 20 cts。 (右) 斯里蘭卡的星光石英，重16.20 cts，有“星狀網絡”。



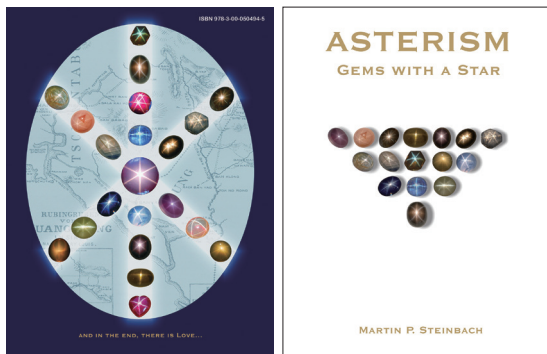
**Fig. 3** (L) Star rose quartz photographed in transmitted light (diasterism) with a blue 405 nm laser. (R) A synthetic corundum given an additional diffusion treatment, with two stars, 11.15 cts, in rare orange.

(左) 用藍色405 nm激光在透射光(偏光)下拍攝的粉晶石英。(右) 經擴散處理的人造剛玉，具雙星的稀有橙色星石，11.15 cts。



**Fig. 4** (L) Star quartz evolution. Awesome. (R) The author looking at one of the biggest star diopsides wt 739 cts.

(左) 特式的石英星石。(右) 作者凝視著一顆重739 cts的透輝石，是最大的透輝石之一。



**Fig. 5** (L) The back cover of the Standard Edition.  
(R) Exclusive Collector Edition.  
(左) 封底。(右) 獨家收藏版。

**CC: What was your target audience?  
Historians? Lab gemmologists?**

**MPS:** I wrote ASTERISM – Gems with a Star, for gemmologists, certainly. And for appraisers, students, collectors and enthusiasts but also

for gem dealers and those who are simply gem lovers.

These nine main chapters are followed by Annexes and Indices, and here you can consult a star grading scale (MPSS) I developed especially for this book. A list of more than 200! There are different cat's eyes, a price chart of star stones, scientific institutions, a general index, an index of persons and an index of places are also included.

**CC: Thank you Martin. This is a fabulous book. It has already been defined as a “classic”. The pictures are full of atmosphere and beauty.**

*The book is divided into 9 main chapters and each chapter is accompanied by a comprehensive literature list.*

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